



Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Banwell Parish Council: Cemetery Service

1. Service/Policy/Function Being Assessed: Banwell Parish Cemetery – encompassing cemetery fees, regulations, operations, and associated risk management.

2. Purpose: To ensure that the cemetery service is accessible, fair, and respectful to all individuals regardless of protected characteristics, and that it meets equality legislation standards.

3. Aims and Objectives:

- Provide safe and dignified burial and memorial services.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legal, health and safety, and environmental standards.
- Offer services that are equitable and culturally sensitive.
- Uphold the rights of grave owners and the bereaved.

4. Evidence Considered:

- Cemetery Regulations Policy (May 2025)
- Cemetery Risk Assessment
- Memorial Inspection Risk Assessment
- Cemetery Fees (from January 2024)
- Equality Act 2010
- Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977

5. Who Is Affected?

- Residents and non-residents of Banwell Parish
- Bereaved families and next of kin
- Funeral directors and memorial masons
- Council staff and contractors
- Visitors to the cemetery

6. Assessment of Impact on Protected Characteristics:

Protected Characteristic	Likely Impact	Comments and Mitigation
Age	Positive	Free interments and grave purchase for children under 18. No upper age restrictions.
Disability	Low risk	Path inspections in place. Add seasonal signage for trip hazards and review wheelchair access.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	No policies that discriminate or exclude.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Neutral	Burial rights are based on legal relationships or documented next of kin, not marital status.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	Dedicated sections for infant and stillborn remains; free provision for infants.
Race	Low risk	Cultural customs supported, but clearer public guidance needed for burial timing and practices.
Religion or Belief	Moderate impact	Out-of-hours burials allowed at Clerk's discretion. Staff training to reinforce inclusive practice recommended.
Sex	Neutral	No discriminatory provisions.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	Equal access regardless of orientation.

Other (e.g., low income)	Moderate	Non-residents pay double fees and are only eligible for burial if a demonstrable Banwell connection exists. This may disproportionately affect individuals who have moved out of the area due to housing or affordability issues. Clearer communication of what qualifies as a Banwell connection may support transparency and fairness
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Additional Consideration: Cultural Needs (e.g., Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Communities)

Banwell Parish Cemetery is a designated lawn cemetery, meaning only simple headstones are permitted and the use of kerbstones, fencing, planting, or other memorialisation is not allowed. This uniform style supports maintenance and ensures accessibility. We recognise that some cultural or religious groups, including members of the Traveller community, may have burial preferences that differ from the lawn cemetery model. Where such needs cannot be accommodated within Banwell Cemetery, neighbouring facilities such as Congresbury Cemetery may offer more flexible options.

7. Key Actions and Recommendations:

Issue	Action	Deadline	Responsible Officer
Physical Accessibility	Continue formal visual inspections each October and June and informal checks during burials and grass cutting.	Ongoing	Clerk / Cemetery Committee
Cultural Burials	Provide public-facing information on out-of-hours/cultural need process.	June 2025	Clerk
Communication	Offer forms and policies in accessible formats.	Ongoing	Clerk
Fee Fairness	Publish clear criteria for Banwell connection.	Oct 2025	Cemetery Committee
Public Information	Create a short guidance leaflet or web page summarising cemetery rules, Banwell connection criteria, and contact details.	June 2025	Clerk

8. Monitoring and Review:

- The EQIA will be formally reviewed every three years, with the next full review due in June 2028.
- Monitoring will take place annually alongside fee and risk assessments to ensure ongoing compliance and to identify any emerging issues.
- Complaints logs and user feedback will be reviewed to highlight any equality-related concerns.
- Due to the small scale of the cemetery (approximately 500 plots with around 5 burials annually), informal monitoring through feedback from bereaved families and funeral directors may be used.

9. Conclusion: Banwell Parish Council's cemetery service is proportionate and inclusive for the scale of its operations and broadly meets equality requirements. The Council has already implemented fair practices in relation to age, maternity, and religious observance. Given the small size of the cemetery and low number of annual burials, a light-touch, proportionate approach—focused on clear communication, informal feedback, and annual monitoring will be used.

Further improvements in signage, access information, and transparency around residency and cultural considerations will help ensure the service remains fair and respectful for all users.

Date of EQIA: June 2025

Review Due: June 2028

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